

## GENDER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The rigidity and stability which characterized the international system during the Cold War era has given way to an extraordinarily complex configuration. As the issues which confront the international community become increasingly complex, analysis of conflict as simply a matter of East versus West is no longer adequate. Lacking clearly defined centers of power, the international system must be considered from new and innovative analytical perspectives. This issue of *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* offers its readers one such approach: feminist theory.

We have appropriately titled this issue, "Gender in International Relations: Evolving Perspectives." For while women constitute half of the world's population, they do not have a corresponding political representation, and policy-makers tend to ignore or misrepresent women's concerns. The articles which follow explore the implications of this disparity for both the theory and the practice of international relations.

V. Spike Peterson addresses the definition of "self" and its relevance for political identity. She posits that gendered divisions of power, labor and resources are central issues worldwide, though they are all but ignored in conventional International Relations discussions. Through a critique of relevant literature, Peterson offers a basis for further discussion of conflicting allegiances and their ramifications for state authority.

Marysia Zalewski considers the fundamental role of gender in International Relations theory. She argues that viewing the world from the periphery evinces more than a new perspective: it offers a dramatic restructuring of traditional conceptions, thus eliminating bias which otherwise distorts both theory and practice.

Diverging theory and practice also affect the concept of human rights, as embodied in the UN Charter. Andrew Deutz examines the history of human rights and concludes that, while human rights theory encompasses women's issues, in practice it has not adequately met women's needs.

Moving from theoretical to actual, Anne Sisson Runyan effectively illustrates the changes in the traditional power sources of the international system through a case study of *Fuerza Unida*, an organization of women factory workers.

As a feminist and peace activist, Simona Sharoni lends a unique and timely perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian peace-making process. Arguing that both policy makers and scholars have ignored appeals for a fresh start, she calls for both the Israeli state and the West to adopt a new approach taking into account the perspectives and experiences of women.

Jacqui True, Stacey Mayhall and Annie Foster address the process of democratization and women's relation to the nation-state. In contemporary Europe, the simultaneous processes of integration and disintegration threaten the sov-

ereign order of the established nation-state. True examines the concept of citizenship and argues that women have a fundamentally different relation to the nation-state system than men, and thus will be affected differently by the recent trends towards integration in Western Europe. Taking a similar approach, Mayhall suggests that the democratization in Eastern Europe has, in reality, diminished women's political influence.

Finally, Foster argues that, while women have historically been excluded from politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, the recent democratization trend offers an unprecedented opportunity for women. Previous aid programs have, by and large, ignored women and their concerns, dooming these efforts to failure. Foster urges the international community to seize this occasion to actively support women's political participation and thereby lay the foundations for sustainable development.

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